

Summary - Public Safety Committee Meeting

June 13, 2017

Government Center - Conference Room 11

Committee Members Present:

Sharon Bulova, Chairman
Penelope Gross, Mason District (Vice Chairman)
John Cook, Braddock District (Committee Chair)
John Foust, Dranesville District
Pat Herrity, Springfield District
Catherine Hudgins, Hunter Mill District
Jeff McKay, Lee District
Kathy Smith, Sully District
Linda Smyth, Providence District
Daniel Storck, Mount Vernon District

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) Board members were also invited to attend based on topics of mutual interest on the agenda, and members Karen Corbett Sanders, Sandy Evans, Megan McLaughlin, Ryan McElveen, Dalia Palchik, Elizabeth Schultz, and Jane Strauss attended and participated in the discussion. Acting Superintendent Steve Lockard also attended.

Summary of Previous Public Safety Committee Meeting (March 21, 2017):

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/bosclerk/board-committees/meetings/2017/public-safety-committee-draft-summary-march21.pdf>

June 13, 2017 Meeting Agenda:

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/bosclerk/board-committees/meetings/2017/public-safety-committee-meeting-agenda-june13.pdf>

June 13, 2017 Meeting Materials:

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/bosclerk/board-committees/meetings/2017/cog-presentation.pdf>
<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/bosclerk/board-committees/meetings/2017/community-emergency-response-engagement-planning.pdf>
<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/bosclerk/board-committees/meetings/2017/volunteer-fairfax-presentation.pdf>
<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/bosclerk/board-committees/meetings/2017/cert-presentation.pdf>
<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/bosclerk/board-committees/meetings/2017/responding-to-gangs-presentation.pdf>

Today's meeting was called to order at 1:05 P.M.

After a brief introduction, the minutes from the March 21, 2017 meeting were approved.

The first main topic on the agenda was *Community Emergency Response Planning*.

The first presentation, entitled *Regional Coordination – Public Safety in Metropolitan Washington* was presented by Scott Boggs, Homeland Security and Public Safety Managing Director, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG). Highlights of the presentation included:

- COG coordinates regional initiatives such as community preparedness initiatives. The Emergency Preparedness Council is one of these groups, focusing on a whole community approach. Membership includes elected officials, the business community, as well as local, state and federal leadership.
- Regional planning includes a workgroup of local staff working this issue, developing and maintaining regional guides, plans and checklists. Currently working on project overviews and maintaining over 14 regional plans and guides.

The second presentation, entitled *Community Emergency Response Engagement and Planning*, was presented by Seamus Mooney, Fairfax County Emergency Management Coordinator. Highlights of the presentation included:

- Office of Emergency Management (OEM) focuses on coordination and collaboration; planning; and enhancing community resiliency and outreach - "Preparedness through Engagement."
- Current focus is on producing a *Community Emergency Response Guide*. This document is intended to be a one-stop guide that outlines strategies that the community can take to support themselves in the event of a disaster or emergency. The document will be designed to be a companion document to the County Emergency Operations Plan, and structured based on the four phases of emergency management: mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. The document will highlight both personal responsibilities and community/neighborhood responsibilities, and will include information such as a family response plan, having an emergency kit, staying informed, contact information, etc.

Supervisor Cook added some ideas on the *Community-Based Emergency Response Guide*. His concern is ensuring more proactive outreach to members of the community, for awareness and to help them to more effectively prepare for community-based response. He is interested in using the Office of Public Affairs and the Department of Cable and Consumer Services to also assist in this effort.

The third presentation, entitled *Volunteer Efforts in Emergency Response*, was presented by Elise Neil Bengston, Volunteer Fairfax. Highlights of the presentation included:

- Volunteer Fairfax connects communities in emergency situations. They are a leader in disaster volunteerism and donation management. Among others, they work with Volunteer Emergency Team (VET), Fairfax County Community Collaboration for Disaster Resiliency (Community Resiliency Group), and the Volunteer Reception Center (VRC).
- The Community Resiliency Group works with networks of community partners from varying organizations. The VET is a group of dedicated individuals assisting in deploying volunteers to agencies through a clearing house known as a Volunteer Reception Center. VRCs are used to screen and assign spontaneous volunteers. VRC is managed by Volunteer Fairfax.

The fourth presentation, entitled *Community Emergency Response Team Program*, was presented by Dana Powers, Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department's Office of the Volunteer Liaison. Highlights of the presentation included:

- The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) is a Fairfax program started in 2003. It is a three tiered program - trained, active and advanced. Program is taught by FRD academy instructors as well as volunteer instructors. Over 125 basic CERT classes taught. Over 3000 graduates. 60 extracurricular classes per year.
- CERT works on simple focused core principles: take care of yourself, take care of your family, take care of your neighbors, take care of your neighborhood, recruit and organize your neighbors to help.
- Three levels: Basic Trained (train and release); Active CERT, Active CERT-Advanced.
- Classes held at FRD Academy, two nights a week for seven sessions and a final exercise.
- Presentation summarizes the many types of classes offered.

Board Discussion:

- Supervisor Gross asked if there are any outdated mutual response agreements that need to be addressed. Scott Boggs responded that they are in various states but are being worked on. Supervisor Gross is also concerned about the need for materials in multiple languages and being respectful to many different cultural groups. For example, identifying accepted community leaders and recognizing that the gender, age, and ethnicity of trainers may impact the community's receptiveness to training initiatives are important. Along with Supervisor Gross, Supervisor Cook also reiterated the importance of cultural awareness, multilingual outreach, and inclusion. Karen Corbett Sanders also recommended community trainings and presentations be video-recorded and posted or shared with others, including FCPS, to help reach broader audiences.
- Elise Neil Bengston mentioned one area they have worked on is reaching out into the faith communities to try and access diverse communities. Other County agencies have been doing the same.
- Supervisor Storck asked about the Covanta Fire and the issues with communication tools in that situation. Seamus Mooney responded about what occurred and some of the lessons learned. They are working on revised guidelines to be completed prior to the Covanta facility going back online in August.
- Supervisor Cook noted that many communication avenues exist but he is concerned about getting a consistent, quick message out in the event of a major emergency or critical incident. Seamus Mooney discussed the Fairfax Alerts System and its capability, but also some of the limitations including lower than desired participation. He also noted several other alert systems we can access depending on the circumstances as some are restricted to specific types of incidents. Supervisor Cook noted it is important to better publicize our communication systems and their uses.
- FCPS indicates their willingness and ability to assist with distribution of information through their existing school-based networks.

The second main topic was an update on the Body Worn Cameras Pilot Program provided by Colonel Edwin C. Roessler Jr., Chief of Police; Cathy Muse, Director Department of Procurement and Material

Management; Captain Chantel Cochrane, Police Department; and Kofi Annan, President, Fairfax County Chapter, NAACP. Highlights of the presentation included:

- After a brief introduction by Chief Roessler, Cathy Muse provided an update on the procurement process for the pilot program. A request for proposal is out and the County is negotiating with top two ranked vendors.
- Captain Cochrane updated the status of the draft body worn camera policy. The policy currently being drafted is largely modeled on the recently written DCJS policy and is designed to be consistent with the County's existing in-car video policy. Many stakeholders have been consulted as their feedback is necessary to achieve co-production. It is important that the General Order ensures accountability, maintains officer safety, preserves civil liberties, and meets privacy expectations. The policy must also be consistent with department training. Process is taking time but it is important this be done correctly. The Board wants to see the draft policy as soon as feasible.
- Koffi Annan, Fairfax County NAACP, indicates his organization is supportive of Fairfax County's body camera effort. He appreciates being involved from the outset. NAACP's feedback has been valued and policy development input taken seriously. He noted it is important that Fairfax remain a leader in transparency. He noted the significant cost of body cameras; however, he believes the tangible benefits are well worth the additional cost. He cited examples in other jurisdictions such as fewer complaints/court proceedings, but also the intangible benefits of building additional trust for Police in the community.

Board Discussion:

- The Board asked when the procurement process would be complete and when the pilot will be implemented. Chief Roessler explained that some agencies belonging to the Major Cities Chiefs Association have experienced financial and legal complications with vendors concerning long term retention of data and recordings generated during pilot project deployments of body cameras. Complications have included the premature destruction of media by third parties which has jeopardized criminal investigations and prosecutions. Chief Roessler noted that the Commonwealth of Virginia specifies 99 year retention of evidence related to homicides as an example. Chief Roessler committed to briefing the Board when the full scope of costs has been developed through the procurement process currently underway. Supervisor Jeff McKay requested that Chief Roessler draft for the Board a written timeline mapping out, with milestones, the progress of procurement, policy development, body camera pilot deployment, and pilot project review. When will it start? How long will the pilot be? What is the multi-year strategy? Ranges of time are ok, but they need something to be able to follow. The Board indicated they are ok with considering all factors to make sure this is done right, but are anxious to get the pilot started as soon as possible.
- The Board also asked about the cost implications. County Executive Ed Long responded that there is \$1.9M in the Ad Hoc-related reserve to accommodate the pilot cost, but that full implementation costs, will need to come back to the Board. That will have to be accommodated in future year budgets.
- In response to general question about delays in the original time horizon, Chief Roessler noted that going through the solicitation process has raised additional questions, including legal questions. Other law enforcement agencies in the Major Cities Chiefs Association have reportedly experienced legal problems with vendors when costs for necessary technology infrastructure

enhancements and media storage/retention recurring costs of pilot programs were not adequately specified in pilot project procurement and initial deployment.

- In response to a question about the pilot, the Police Department may use either one or both vendors. A final decision has not been made. The Chief noted that the pilot will take place in the Mount Vernon and Mason District stations.
- It is noted that the pilot is for patrol officer deployment, but body cameras could eventually be extended to School Resource Officers (SRO). Several School Board members raised a concern about the use of body worn cameras in schools, including the legal implications. Supervisor Cook noted that the School Board should have an internal conversation about this. He noted that SROs are not part of the pilot so there is time to flush out these issues, but it is important to have this discussion.

The third main topic was a Gang Prevention discussion. Speakers at the table included Bob Bermingham, Director, Court Services Unit, Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court; Major Paul Cleveland, Police Department; Jesse Ellis, Prevention Manager, Department of Neighborhood and Community Services; Stefan Mascoll, Coordinator, Student Safety and Wellness, Fairfax County Public Schools; Meredith McKeen, Director of Youth Initiatives, Northern Virginia Family Services (NVFS); and Colonel Edwin C. Roessler Jr., Chief of Police. The highlights of this presentation, entitled *Responding to Gangs: A Collaborative Approach*, included:

- Discussion of expanded gang prevention efforts beginning in mid-2000s
- Discussion of definitions of gang-related (someone involved is known to be a gang member) and gang-motivated (a crime that is carried out due to organized gang direction) incidents.
- Over 2,000 gang members and associates involved with over 80 gangs known in Fairfax County.
- Several slides and data were provided in the presentation. Jesse Ellis noted the importance of having positive assets (six mitigating assets) invested in the lives of children which tend to reduce the amount of gang participation. Data limitations are acknowledged and addressed.
- One of the slides displays the number of unaccompanied children released by the Office of Refugee Resettlement to sponsors in Fairfax County during Federal Fiscal Years 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017 (through 3/31/2017)
- The overall approach has not changed:
 - Education/Awareness and Primary Prevention: Activities include community presentations, FCPS gang prevention and sex trafficking prevention curricula, Middle School After School program, and key stakeholder outreach
 - Targeted Prevention and Intervention activities: Activities include NVFS intervention, prevention and education; place-based services such as opportunity neighborhoods and Road Dawg
 - Enforcement/Suppression: Include the Gang unit, regional task force, and cooperation with the federal government
- Some programs have been cut resulting in less sustained attention and cross-system collaboration including: the gang coordinator position eliminated, school education officers eliminated and reductions in intervention, prevention and education programming
- New issues in need of resources include reunification programming, social media, domestic and sexual violence and trafficking, and trauma-informed services
- A series of 14 specific recommendations are included on slides 16-18 of the linked presentation

Board Discussion:

- School Board members noted that coordination is key. There have been successes in keeping specific gang activity out of schools.
- A focus is the need to have safety in the community, particularly for many youth. The importance of additional community policing was noted.
- The Board noted that this is an important topic that requires additional time and review. There is a concern of younger and more violent gang members. There was discussion about intervention programs needing to be funded and resourced, and it was noted that the regional gang task force operates with less funding than it used to. It was also noted that the costs for the recommendations were missing and the Board wants to understand the cost implications.
- Supervisor Herrity noted that the programs the County has in place are valid, but wants to ensure programs are viewed as a priority, resource needs and costs are outlined, to include at the federal, state, and local level, and more discussion time allotted in future forums.
- Members of both Boards appreciate the process and recommendations. Need to also look at it through a broader lens of finding ways to provide greater opportunities for youth to stay out of gangs. Access to transportation is also a major issue.
- There was concern about the upward trend of the numbers. Chief Roessler responded in agreement. This is a regional problem that continues to grow and needs to get back on the discussion table now before it turns into an epidemic.

The next meeting of the Public Safety Committee is scheduled for October 10, 2017 at 10:00 A.M.

The meeting adjourned at 3:10 P.M.